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ובער	נדיבותה	בכך נחשבת :	הכין	היות אצלה	הלום נקרבת :
יום ז"ך	לחדש אב	שנת ש"ח	העת	אשר יגזור	אלקים בו
באה	לעולם זה	ובו נצבת :	הבא	לבן אדם	בלי מחשבת :
נשאת	שנת ש"פא	וב' ט"בת	אז י-	היו שנית	אחדים פה
צ"ג ע-	לתה נפשה	ברום לשבת :	אדמת	בשרם עוד	הכי מורכבת :

A. BERLINER.

The Pronunciation of the Letter **AYN** (y).

No doubt exists among Oriental philologists as to the correct pronunciation of the letter *Ayn*, so that little that is new can be said on the subject. The aim of the following remarks is, therefore, chiefly to show how it should *not* be pronounced. Although the letter is one of the principal characteristics of the Semitic languages, the habit of articulating it falsely is very widely diffused. Many Jews in foreign countries, it is true, fancy they pronounce most grammatically if they speak it through the nose, but it is not taught so in the schools, whilst in this country, in Holland, and perhaps elsewhere, the nasal articulation of the *y* occupies the rank of a doctrine.

It is, however, necessary to introduce this little research *in absurdum* by a brief statement about the nature of this consonant ; and here it is sufficient to say that it belongs to the class of the *gutturals*, and is produced by a strong compression of the throat, accompanied by expulsion of the breath.

For non-Semitic individuals the pronunciation of this guttural sound is rather difficult, as they are inclined to relax the pressure of

Cried a voice : Thy lair now leaving.
 To My Garden in heaven come nigh.
 "Israel" arose at this bidding,
 To be saved by the Lord on high.'

I. A.

the throat and utter it exactly like the common *a*. The European Jews being accustomed from their childhood only to speak non-Semitic languages, their organs of speech have consequently been developed in a manner similar to those of the peoples among whom they live. One can soon discover from the manner a Jew pronounces Hebrew his native country or even province. The right enunciation, however, can easily be learnt, and the Hebrew language itself shows the way.

For the Jews who read their prayers and the weekly portions of the law in the Hebrew original, this, especially the pronunciation of the \aleph , is a matter of importance, as otherwise the sense of many words could be greatly altered, which would make the reading invalid or change it into blasphemy. The Talmud, *e.g.*, censures the substitution of \aleph for \aleph , and disallows special classes of people from acting as readers "because they speak the *Alefs* like *Ayns* and the *Ayns* like *Alefs*."¹ Nevertheless the Talmud, following the rules of late Aramaic orthography, changes \aleph and \aleph in many instances, *e.g.*, $\aleph\aleph = \aleph\aleph$, $\aleph\aleph = \aleph\aleph$,² etc., etc.

Is it in order to avoid this change of \aleph with \aleph that so many Jews have adopted the habit of pronouncing \aleph as a nasal sound *ng*? At any rate, it is characteristic that they keep to it with a sort of fanaticism which would be worthy of a better cause. Let us see how far this pronunciation is justifiable.

The remark I made concerning the softening of \aleph into \aleph in the orthography of the Talmud holds good for many Semitic languages of older and later date. As to the Northern dialects, in Assyrian it disappears entirely; the same is the case with some younger Aramaic dialects, and classical Hebrew also shows frequent instances of softening the \aleph or dropping it altogether. Arabic, which remained longest untouched by foreign influences, has not only preserved the pure pronunciation of \aleph , but possesses another still stronger guttural, *gh* (spoken almost like *r*), which undoubtedly existed also in Hebrew. The Greek translation of the Bible gives many instances of this, but it is sufficient to mention the two, *Pharao* and *Gomorrha*. It is indeed superfluous to say another word on this matter, which is known to every beginner of Hebrew or any other kindred language.

On the other hand, the Semitic alphabets have only one nasal

¹ Megillah 24; *cp.* Berakh. 32, and other places also concerning the change of \aleph and \aleph . The Talmud does not mention a nasal pronunciation, because it was evidently quite unknown at that time.

² Levy in his *Woerterbuch* reads $\aleph\aleph$, against which see Wright, "Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages," p. 49.

consonant, *n*;¹ a mixed sound, as in the French *on*, does not exist. On the contrary, nasal-sounding Greek words, foreign in Aramaic, are dissolved into distinct *n-k*, viz., ἀνάγκη (*anangkee*)=אָנָנְכִי (*anankee*). Even the name *Onkelos*, which is often quoted in support of a nasal pronunciation, is to be read *On-keles*.

However much otherwise the pronunciation of the vowels among the Spanish Jews differs from that of the German Jews, both classes agree in pronouncing the *ʔ* as a nasal. Now it can be clearly proved that the Spanish Jews did not bring this nasal articulation from their original country, for the simple reason that the Jews living in the Pyrenaic Peninsula, North Africa and in the East, speak the *ʔ* indeed very deeply in the throat, and have altogether preserved the full Oriental pronunciation of Hebrew. The members of the Spanish congregation, who have adopted the *ng*, call their leading body—employing the term used in the Mishnah—*Mahamad* (מַעֲמָד) and not as we should expect, *Mangamad*; they say *Homer* (עֹמֶר) and not *ngomer*. In these two words they render the *ʔ* by another guttural, the ה, for which any amount of examples can be brought, and which also did the Phœnicians, as in *Hasdrubal* (עֹזְרָבַעַל). And all English Jews call the language of the Old Testament and the Prayer-Book *Hebrew*, according to Latin *Hebraice* and Greek ἐβραϊστί, but in the original they would certainly read *ngibri*.

From the preceding remarks we can deduce the rule that words with *ʔ*, which in olden times passed over into daily use, have maintained their right pronunciation, and that, consequently, the corruption into *ng* is of considerably later date. How did it arise? That is difficult to say. Perhaps for the following reason:—In the Polish language there exist two nasal sounds, *eng* and *ong*, which, however, are not expressed orthographically, but by *e* and *o* with a *cedille*, viz., *e* and *o*. It appears to me that the Jews in countries of Polono-Slavic population first translated this nasal sound by the inaudible Hebrew consonants, whenever the vowels *a* and *o* occurred. The letter *ʔ* was especially exposed to this treatment, because people had a faint recollection of some peculiarity in its pronunciation. Gradually *ʔ* became a nasal sound when preceded or followed by *any* vowel. This nasal articulation was even extended to the *ס* in other words of frequent use, such as אַנְשֵׁר, pronounced *angsher*, whereby the *ῥωῆ compositum* of the first syllable became a full (and accentuated) *Pataḥ*. With the emigration of Polish Jews to western countries the nasal *ʔ* was propagated and also adopted by the Sephardic Jews, the

¹ Rather a *liquida*, and therefore often interchanged with other *liquida*, especially *m*. Cp. Wright, *l. c.*, pp. 67 and 145 *sqq.*

social exclusiveness of the latter forming no barrier against the penetration of this anomaly. Even the language of the best classes of a country cannot prevent slang expressions and corruptions creeping into it.

Deeply rooted as the evil is, it can be extirpated by means of the school. Teachers can easily control their own pronunciation and teach it to their pupils. Unfortunately, one cannot say that the study of Hebrew grammar, first cultivated by Jews more than one thousand years ago, receives from Jews of the present day—with rare exceptions—the attention due to it.

I have, in writing these lines, the feeling of stirring a wasps' nest, and am prepared to see the champions of the *ngayn* defend it as some holy relic. Many are anxious to make the public worship æsthetic and attractive; here is an opportunity to do away with something which is in every way hideous and unæsthetic.

H. HIRSCHFELD.

The Works of Professor Graetz.

HERR HALBERSTAMM has cast a keen and kindly eye over the Bibliography of the works of the late Professor Graetz, which appeared in the January number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, and supplies the following notes and additions which will be of interest:—

(1) Kurze Erwiderung auf die nachträcblichen Bemerkungen zu Graetz' Koheleth (*Rahmer's Literarische Beilage zur isr. Wochenschrift*, 1872).

(2) Letter, in Hebrew, to R. Zeeb Wolf Chajoth, concerning the life of Abraham Ibn Ezra (in *Ha-Karmel*, 1866. The letter is dated 22 Elul, 1864).

(3) Three parts of the first volume of the "History," translated into Hebrew by Calman Schulmann.

(4) The German translation of the Psalms was also published separately.

(5) The proposed contribution to the Krotoschin edition of the Jerusalem Talmud (which was entered in the list published in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW), was never made, as the plan fell through. The title-page, however, bears Professor Graetz's name.

I. ABRAHAMS.